

Graduate Certificate in Gerontology Program

Description and Goals

The U.S. census projects the number of Americans 60 years and older (older adults) will reach 70 million by 2030. The National Institute on Aging estimates the need for 70,000 social workers in older adult services by 2020. Given these statistics, social work professionals require current knowledge about a broad range of fundamental issues that encompass the older adult experience. The *Graduate Certificate in Gerontology Program* (GCGP) in the LSU MSW Program, in cooperation with the LSU Life Course and Aging Center (LCAC), addresses the educational needs of full time and part time students who aspire to be engaged in planning, administration, and/or provision of services for older adults. Goals of the GCGP are the following:

- to prepare students to practice in the field of gerontological social work - to carry out professional roles and responsibilities consistent with the values and ethics of social work as they relate to practice with older adults;
- to prepare students to understand the biopsychosocial, economic, administrative, service delivery, and social policy contexts of aging within the parameters of social work practice in a health care setting;
- to provide students with an interdisciplinary, educational experience and raise awareness of perspective and skills from a health or human service discipline additional to social work; and
- to provide students with a gerontological field experience that enhances understanding of social work practice relationships based on empowerment and respect for the values of human dignity and worth, cultural diversity, self-determination, and social justice.

Admission Requirements

Admission to the GCGP requires students to meet all general admission requirements for SSW graduate certificate programs. The GCGP encourages its students to complete the introductory, summer course, *Introduction to Gerontological Social Work*, which can count toward the course curriculum requirements.

Course requirements

The GCGP curriculum requires either option A or B:

Option A: Non-thesis option. Completion of nine (9) credit hours of graduate coursework that focus primarily on aging and older adult issues: minimum of three (3) hours in *Social Work** and three (3) hours interdisciplinary**. These courses qualify as electives for the MSW curriculum.

Option B: Thesis-option. Thesis work replaces six (6) of the aforementioned credit hours requirement. The thesis topic must be gerontology related and confirmed by the GCGP coordinator as germane to older adults.

Note: For a list of social work and interdisciplinary courses that apply toward the GCGP, please contact the GCGP coordinator.

* Social Work courses	** Interdisciplinary courses
7807: Special Topics: <i>Introduction to Gerontological Social Work</i> (3 hrs)	CMST 7910: <i>Seminar in Interpersonal Communication Theory</i> (3 hrs)
7408: <i>Social Work & Aging</i> (3 hrs)	COMD 7780: <i>Communication Disability in Aging</i> (3 hrs)
7807: Special Topics: <i>Loss, Grief, Death & Dying</i> (3 hrs)	HRE 4025: <i>Principles of Adult Education</i> (3 hrs)
7907: <i>Public Policies & the Aging</i> (3 hrs)	HUEC 7058: <i>Adulthood & Aging</i> (3 hrs)
	HUEC 7063: <i>Economics of Aging</i> (3 hrs)
	IE 7467: <i>Cognitive Ergonomics & Work Environments</i> (3 hrs)
	KIN 7503: <i>Dimensions of Aging</i> (3 hrs)
	PSYC 4072: <i>Developmental Psychology of Adulthood & Aging</i> (3 hrs)
	PSYC 7938: <i>Seminar in Cognitive Aging</i> (3 hrs)

Rotational Field Internship

The GCGP requires students to complete the gerontological rotation field internship in the advanced year. For a field agency to be considered *gerontological* in scope, the Council on Social Work Education requires that at least 50% of its work be dedicated to its older adult constituency. The MSW Field Office provides details on this placement, including a list of placements participating in the rotational internship.

Life Course & Aging Center Requirements

Honoring its multidisciplinary commitment, the GCGP maintains the following two requirements with the LCAC:

1. student membership in the LSU LCAC throughout the advanced year (see Dr. Lilly Allen, LCAC Associate Director, for membership details)
2. either (A) or (B) below
 - A. completion of LCAC's signature course: LCA 2000 – *Interdisciplinary Seminar on Aging* (1 credit hr.); or
 - B. completion of an independent study with an older adult focus (1 credit hr.; see the GCGP coordinator for details).

If interested, or for more information about the Graduate Certificate in Gerontology Program, please contact Dr. Scott Wilks, GCGP Coordinator: swilks@lsu.edu or 225-578-1196.